

REMARKS

Claims 1-18, 52-63, and 73 are now pending. Applicant has amended claims 1, 16, and 73.

The Examiner has rejected claims 16-18 and 73 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Applicant has amended the claims to address the Examiner's concern.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-6, 9-18, and 52-63 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Gautier, and claims 7-8 and 73 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gautier. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Gautier describes a technique in which a viewer can have different sets of preferences for the same or different set-top boxes that are mapped to a network account. Gautier describes that multiple "Viewer Accounts" (or "Viewer Identities") map to a single "Network Account" (or "Network Identity"). "A Viewer Account is an account that is local to or resides on a particular ASTB [advanced set-top box] which stores the Viewer's preferences, video permissions, email and Internet information, and a UID" (Gautier, [0023].) The "network identity is associated with the unique identity of the subscriber which is contained in each of a subscriber's or user's viewer accounts." (Gautier, [0015].)

Gautier also describes that these multiple viewer accounts are created by a viewer as child viewer accounts. (Gautier, [0040-0044].) If the viewer of the child viewer account is different from the viewer who created the child viewer account, then the child viewer account is mapped to a new network identity. If the viewer of the child viewer account is the same as the viewer creator, then the child viewer account is mapped to the existing network identity of the viewer account.

Applicant's claims are directed to identifying and combining common accounts. For example, a first user (e.g., a parent) may establish a first account associated with a first node and assign a first user identifier to the first account. A second user (e.g., a child) may establish a second account associated with a second node and assign a second user identifier to the second account. When the first user attempts to use the

second node using the first user identifier, applicant's technique ascertains whether the first and second accounts should be combined. For example, claim 1 recites "when it is determined that the first and second accounts represent the same account, combining the first and second accounts into a single account."

It appears that the Examiner is relying on Gautier's mapping of multiple child viewer accounts to the same network account as "combining the first and second accounts into a single account." Although multiple viewer accounts may be mapped to the same network account, Gautier keeps viewer accounts as separate accounts and does not combine them into a single account. Moreover, after mapping two viewer accounts to a network account, there would still be two viewer accounts and one network account, which is clearly not combining into a "single account."

Based on the above amendment and remarks, applicant respectfully request reconsideration of the application and its early allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-8000.

Date: _____

Respectfully submitted,

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